

Dubai slows down Pfizer vaccine rollout amid shipment delays

24 January 2021



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The emirate of Dubai has said it was slowing down its rollout of the Pfizer-BioNTech coronavirus vaccine due to a temporary delay in global deliveries.

Dubai, one of the seven emirates that make up the United Arab Emirates, began mass inoculations in December after the approval of vaccines by Chinese firm Sinopharm and US drugmaker Pfizer and its German partner BioNTech.

According to [health officials](#), the UAE has already vaccinated over two million of its approximately 10 million population—one of the highest rate in the world.

On Saturday, the Dubai Health Authority said it will scale back on vaccinations after Pfizer announced in mid-January shipment delays for up to a month due to works at its key plant in Belgium.

"DHA is working on rescheduling the first dose of the COVID-19 Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine," it said on Twitter.

"The manufacturer has announced the expansion

of the vaccine production capacity, which has temporarily affected several countries globally."

It added, however, that all those scheduled to take their second dose of the [vaccine](#) should still show up for their appointments.

While other [tourist destinations](#) are applying tight restrictions to control the pandemic, Dubai reopened to visitors in July, despite a sharp spike in cases.

But the glitzy emirate clamped down on its entertainment last week and also suspended non-essential surgery in hospitals after a surge in COVID-19 infections since the New Year.

Over the weekend, it issued more stringent health guidelines, slashing the number of people allowed at social gatherings from 200 to 10 and ordering restaurants and cafes to increase spacing between tables from two metres to three.

While mask-wearing and social distancing have been in force, restaurants, hotels and mega-malls have remained open in Dubai, whose economy heavily relies on tourism.

On Saturday, the UAE recorded 3,566 COVID-19, a new high for the 12th consecutive day. It has so far recorded over 274,000 infections, including 783 deaths.

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APA citation: Dubai slows down Pfizer vaccine rollout amid shipment delays (2021, January 24) retrieved 16 April 2021 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2021-01-dubai-pfizer-vaccine-rollout-shipment.html>

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